

IN THE CLAIMS:

The text of all pending claims, (including withdrawn claims) is set forth below. Cancelled and not entered claims are indicated with claim number and status only. The claims as listed below show added text with underlining and deleted text with ~~strikethrough~~. The status of each claim is indicated with one of (original), (currently amended), (cancelled), (withdrawn), (new), (previously presented), or (not entered).

Please CANCEL claims 1-15, and 21-23 without prejudice or disclaimer, and AMEND claims 17-20 in accordance with the following:

1-15. (Cancelled)

16. (Previously Presented) A constant velocity universal joint, comprising:

an outer race having a spherical inner surface, said spherical inner surface having a plurality of track grooves defined therein, each of said track grooves in the outer race having a groove bottom of a longitudinal sectional shape representing a shape of a curve;

an inner race having a spherical outer surface and positioned inside the outer race, said spherical outer surface having a plurality of track grooves defined therein in correspondence with the respective track grooves in the outer race, each of said track grooves in the inner race having a groove bottom of a longitudinal sectional shape representing a shape of a curve;

a plurality of balls interposed between the outer and inner races and rotatably accommodated between the mating track grooves in the outer and inner races;

a retainer having a plurality of pockets accommodating therein the corresponding balls, said retainer having a spherical outer surface, held in surface contact with the spherical inner surface of the outer race, and a spherical inner surface held in surface contact with the spherical outer surface of the inner race;

each of said track grooves in the outer race having a center of curvature lying in an axial section of the outer race; and

each of said track grooves in the inner race having a center of curvature lying on an axial section of the inner race, said center of curvature of each track groove in the outer race and said center of curvature of each track groove in the inner race being offset an equal distance leftwardly and rightwardly with respect to an angle center of the universal joint;

at least one of said spherical inner surface of the outer race or each of the track grooves in the outer race being defined by a post-hardening cut surface,

a surface of at least the retainer being formed with a surface treatment layer to reduce a frictional resistance, and

a surface treatment layer formed in the inner and outer races is different than the surface treatment layer formed in the surface of the retainer.

17. (Currently Amended) ~~The constant velocity universal joint according to claim 3A~~ constant velocity universal joint, comprising:

an outer race having a substantially spherical inner surface, said substantially spherical inner surface having a plurality of track grooves defined therein, each of said track grooves in the outer race having a groove bottom of a longitudinal sectional shape representing a shape of a curve;

an inner race having a substantially spherical outer surface and positioned inside the outer race, said substantially spherical outer surface having a plurality of track grooves defined therein in correspondence with the respective track grooves in the outer race, each of said track grooves in the inner race having a groove bottom of a longitudinal sectional shape representing a shape of a curve;

a plurality of balls interposed between the outer and inner races and rotatably accommodated between the mating track grooves in the outer and inner races;

a retainer having a plurality of pockets accommodating therein the corresponding balls, said retainer having a substantially spherical outer surface, held in surface contact with the substantially spherical inner surface of the outer race, and a substantially spherical inner surface held in surface contact with the substantially spherical outer surface of the inner race;

each of said track grooves in the outer race having a center of curvature lying in an axial section of the outer race;

each of said track grooves in the inner race having a center of curvature lying on an axial section of the inner race, said center of curvature of each track groove in the outer race and said center of curvature of each track groove in the inner race being offset an equal distance leftwardly and rightwardly with respect to an angle center of the universal joint; and

at least one of said substantially spherical inner surface of the outer race and each of the track grooves in the outer race being defined by a post-hardening cut surface,

wherein of the substantially spherical outer surface, the substantially spherical inner surface, and the pockets, at least the pockets have respective inner surfaces which are defined by a post-hardening cut surface,

a surface of at least the retainer is formed with a surface treatment layer for reducing a frictional resistance,

wherein the surface treatment layer is a film of a solid lubricant, and

further comprising an undercoat is provided between the surface of the retainer and the solid lubricant.

18. (Currently Amended) ~~The constant velocity universal joint according to claim 3~~
A constant velocity universal joint, comprising:

an outer race having a substantially spherical inner surface, said substantially spherical inner surface having a plurality of track grooves defined therein, each of said track grooves in the outer race having a groove bottom of a longitudinal sectional shape representing a shape of a curve;

an inner race having a substantially spherical outer surface and positioned inside the outer race, said substantially spherical outer surface having a plurality of track grooves defined therein in correspondence with the respective track grooves in the outer race, each of said track grooves in the inner race having a groove bottom of a longitudinal sectional shape representing a shape of a curve;

a plurality of balls interposed between the outer and inner races and rotatably accommodated between the mating track grooves in the outer and inner races;

a retainer having a plurality of pockets accommodating therein the corresponding balls, said retainer having a substantially spherical outer surface, held in surface contact with the substantially spherical inner surface of the outer race, and a substantially spherical inner surface held in surface contact with the substantially spherical outer surface of the inner race;

each of said track grooves in the outer race having a center of curvature lying in an axial section of the outer race;

each of said track grooves in the inner race having a center of curvature lying on an axial section of the inner race, said center of curvature of each track groove in the outer race and said center of curvature of each track groove in the inner race being offset an equal distance leftwardly and rightwardly with respect to an angle center of the universal joint; and

at least one of said substantially spherical inner surface of the outer race and each of the track grooves in the outer race being defined by a post-hardening cut surface,

wherein of the substantially spherical outer surface, the substantially spherical inner surface, and the pockets, at least the pockets have respective inner surfaces which are defined by a post-hardening cut surface,

a surface of at least the retainer is formed with a surface treatment layer for reducing a frictional resistance, and

wherein a surface treatment layer formed in-on the inner and outer races is different than the surface treatment layer formed in-on the surface of the retainer.

19. (Currently Amended) ~~The constant velocity universal joint according to claim 5~~
A constant velocity universal joint, comprising:

an outer race having a substantially spherical inner surface, said substantially spherical inner surface having a plurality of track grooves defined therein, each of said track grooves in the outer race having a groove bottom of a longitudinal sectional shape representing a shape of a curve;

an inner race having a substantially spherical outer surface and positioned inside the outer race, said substantially spherical outer surface having a plurality of track grooves defined therein in correspondence with the respective track grooves in the outer race, each of said track grooves in the inner race having a groove bottom of a longitudinal sectional shape representing a shape of a curve;

a plurality of balls interposed between the outer and inner races and rotatably accommodated between the mating track grooves in the outer and inner races;

a retainer having a plurality of pockets accommodating therein the corresponding balls, said retainer having a substantially spherical outer surface, held in surface contact with the substantially spherical inner surface of the outer race, and a substantially spherical inner surface held in surface contact with the substantially spherical outer surface of the inner race;

each of said track grooves in the outer race having a center of curvature lying in an axial section of the outer race;

each of said track grooves in the inner race having a center of curvature lying on an axial section of the inner race, said center of curvature of each track groove in the outer race and said center of curvature of each track groove in the inner race being offset an equal distance leftwardly and rightwardly with respect to an angle center of the universal joint; and

at least one of said substantially spherical inner surface of the outer race and each of the track grooves in the outer race being defined by a post-hardening cut surface,

wherein the constant velocity universal joint is for use with a propeller shaft,

the outer race has an inlet mouth and a rear opening opposite to the inlet mouth and having a diameter smaller than a diameter of the inlet mouth, said outer race also having a fitting flange formed therewith at a location radially outwardly of an outer periphery of the inlet mouth and a cylindrical mount formed therewith to protrude axially outwardly from the opening, wherein the propeller shaft extends through the rear opening and is then engaged with the inner peripheral surface of the inner race,

a surface of at least the retainer is formed with a surface treatment layer to reduce a frictional resistance,

wherein the surface treatment layer is a film of a solid lubricant, and

further comprising an undercoat is provided between the surface of the retainer and the solid lubricant.

20. (Currently Amended) The constant velocity universal joint according to claim 5A constant velocity universal joint, comprising:

an outer race having a substantially spherical inner surface, said substantially spherical inner surface having a plurality of track grooves defined therein, each of said track grooves in the outer race having a groove bottom of a longitudinal sectional shape representing a shape of a curve;

an inner race having a substantially spherical outer surface and positioned inside the outer race, said substantially spherical outer surface having a plurality of track grooves defined therein in correspondence with the respective track grooves in the outer race, each of said track grooves in the inner race having a groove bottom of a longitudinal sectional shape representing a shape of a curve;

a plurality of balls interposed between the outer and inner races and rotatably accommodated between the mating track grooves in the outer and inner races;

a retainer having a plurality of pockets accommodating therein the corresponding balls, said retainer having a substantially spherical outer surface, held in surface contact with the substantially spherical inner surface of the outer race, and a substantially spherical inner surface held in surface contact with the substantially spherical outer surface of the inner race;

each of said track grooves in the outer race having a center of curvature lying in an axial section of the outer race;

each of said track grooves in the inner race having a center of curvature lying on an axial section of the inner race, said center of curvature of each track groove in the outer race and said center of curvature of each track groove in the inner race being offset an equal distance leftwardly and rightwardly with respect to an angle center of the universal joint; and

at least one of said substantially spherical inner surface of the outer race and each of the track grooves in the outer race being defined by a post-hardening cut surface,

wherein the constant velocity universal joint is for use with a propeller shaft,

the outer race has an inlet mouth and a rear opening opposite to the inlet mouth and having a diameter smaller than a diameter of the inlet mouth, said outer race also having a fitting flange formed therewith at a location radially outwardly of an outer periphery of the inlet mouth and a cylindrical mount formed therewith to protrude axially outwardly from the opening, wherein the propeller shaft extends through the rear opening and is then engaged with the inner peripheral surface of the inner race,

a surface of at least the retainer is formed with a surface treatment layer to reduce a frictional resistance, and

wherein a surface treatment layer formed in-on the inner and outer races is different than the surface treatment layer formed in-on the surface of the retainer.

21-23. (Cancelled)